

October 25, 1960

Dr. Howard Newcombe  
Biology Branch  
Atomic Energy of Canada  
Chalk River, Ontario  
Canada

Dear Howard:

Cavalli, Kretchmer and I have had the thought of looking into some aspects of the genetic basis of drug idiosyncracies in children by estimating the consanguinity index from returns of questionnaires to Kretchmer's colleagues in Pediatrics. We realize that there may be some question as to the sources of bias and so forth, but the attempt seems worth the effort. Jim Neel reminded me of your intensive program on the linkage of records in vital statistics and we agreed that this might be an extremely apt application of them if you were interested in the problem and if your techniques were appropriate for this specific job. Presumably, it would be possible to obtain a classification of death certificates of children on the basis of a record of this diagnosis and then you could get to work in trying to estimate the incidence of consanguinity. As there seems little likelihood of anything quite like this being developed in the States, this should be an approach that is at least complementary and perhaps considerably more rigorous than ours. In any case, we would certainly welcome it if you could proceed with an investigation of Canadian material towards the same end.

The material I am enclosing is quite tentative and we would welcome any critical remarks you might wish to add to others that we have received. With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

Encs.  
JL/jh

*cc Kretchmer*

*Newcombe, H.*